



**Director of
Central
Intelligence**

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African Famine: Short-Term Prospects, Problems, and Opportunities

Special National Intelligence Estimate

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**AFRICAN FAMINE: SHORT-TERM
PROSPECTS, PROBLEMS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Information available as of 11 December 1984 was used in the preparation of this Estimate, which was approved by the National Foreign Intelligence Board on that date.

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

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SCOPE NOTE

This Special National Intelligence Estimate, which focuses primarily on Ethiopia, assesses the magnitude of the increasingly critical food situation throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. It analyzes the logistic, political, and economic demands likely to face the United States and other Western donor nations as they attempt to deal with the famine, during the next six to 12 months. The immediate issues—the number of people at risk, external assistance likely to be required, and, most important, the constraints to effective help—are emphasized. Particular heed is paid to the political problems and opportunities resulting from relief efforts, from the perspectives of both donor and recipient countries. An annex presents brief profiles of six additional countries we believe face particularly acute food problems. A more detailed account of the underlying causes of food problems in Africa overall is found in the Interagency Intelligence Assessment *Food Problems in Sub-Saharan Africa: Prospects for 1984 and Beyond*, 22 March 1984.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

More emergency food assistance than was previously thought needed or is currently pledged is required to feed the 14-20 million people who face permanent disability and possible death from starvation over the next six to 12 months. Western food resources are sufficient to meet these needs, although pledges of food aid from Western donors now cover less than half the region's projected emergency food needs. US resources alone cannot meet the full need and must be matched by other Western donors. In the short term, donors will have to make hard choices among competing needy governments until additional budget appropriations can be obtained. Criteria such as recipient government political attitudes toward the donors, recipient government attitudes toward agricultural reform, and recipient willingness to facilitate assistance distribution are likely to prove decisive in allocating such assistance. Coordination among donors, which has been somewhat haphazard, is improving significantly as donor governments become seized with the scope of the problem, and the active efforts of the UN Secretariat and the United States suggest reasonable coordination will be forthcoming. []

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More food aid is needed than can currently be delivered through Africa's inefficient ports and poor ground transportation system. Substantial increases in port discharge rates can be achieved, however, with the installation of bagging and offloading equipment. To expand forward delivery, trucks and spare parts are needed virtually everywhere. Airlift and airdrop operations will probably be necessary. These distributional constraints will keep populations in remote areas at risk, and continuing loss of life among these groups must be expected []

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The famine in Ethiopia and in other parts of Africa is the result of recurrent drought, deforestation, soil degradation, rapid population growth, primitive farming techniques, and counterproductive government policies. The magnitude of the famine and the numbers at risk have been exacerbated by indigenous government policies, especially in Ethiopia, where large segments of the population will suffer permanent disabilities and may die. At the opposite extreme is the case of Kenya, where constructive policies have minimized fatalities and drought effects. []

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Key Ethiopian policies and practices that have exacerbated the famine problem include the following:

- By emphasizing collectivized agriculture and state-run farms and by keeping food prices low in order to maintain urban support, the Mengistu regime has reduced incentives for private farming and failed to keep Ethiopia's food production rising as rapidly as its population. These policies simultaneously reduced foreign exchange earnings and increased dependence on imported food.
- During the present drought and famine, the government has shown little inclination, until recently, to assist in speeding emergency food to the hungry, especially to those in the Provinces of Eritrea, Tigray, and Welo, where insurgents are active:
 - The regime refused, until October 1984, to raise the priority assigned to emergency grain ships in Ethiopia's ports, preferring instead to offload military equipment and development assistance cargo, mostly from Eastern Bloc countries.
 - It has refused rebel offers of "food truces" so that emergency grain can be transported to the 3-4 million people who risk dying from starvation and related causes in insurgent-controlled areas.
 - It has used military forces to block the hungry from entering urban areas to seek food and has forcibly transported some of these refugees back out into the drought-stricken countryside.
 - It has used the famine as a pretext for resurrecting its resettlement program to move northerners into collective farms in the southern and western portions of the country; Mengistu's primary purpose in this program is to weaken the insurgency.
 - It has announced its intent to sell 10,000 metric tons of Soviet-donated rice on the open market, with some of the proceeds probably to go toward the purchase of military equipment. Soviet-supplied "relief" transport aircraft have been turned over to the Ethiopian Air Force, and are being used in the forcible resettlement of northerners to the south [REDACTED]

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Mengistu almost certainly would accept Western offers of additional food assistance for those approximately 3-4 million people at risk from starvation in government-controlled areas of the northern provinces.

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- He would, however, resist efforts to feed those hungry in insurgent-controlled territory—another 3-4 million—initially by delaying and disrupting deliveries, but, if necessary, by using military force.
- If Western countries mount substantial efforts to move relief supplies into insurgent-controlled territory and Mengistu does attempt to block these efforts, the Soviets would back him, but probably would not involve their own troops and aircraft []

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Greater food assistance from the Soviet Union is unlikely, even for its client states. The limits on Soviet food production and shortages of hard currency make such aid unlikely, and Moscow has long insisted that African famine is an outgrowth of colonial exploitation and a Western responsibility. If famine threatens the stability of a client regime, Moscow will more likely respond with military and security assistance. []

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The African continental food crisis will continue into 1986 and large populations will continue at risk, even under optimum circumstances, because of declining agricultural production, various constraints on donors and recipients, continuing civil wars, and the lack of meaningful agricultural reform and development. Recurring droughts and floods will continue to exacerbate this situation. In the somewhat longer term, recent improvements in agricultural technology offer the potential of increasing the region's food productivity, but these can be effective only to the extent that they are understood and implemented by African farmers—a dubious prospect barring major changes in the priorities of African governments. []

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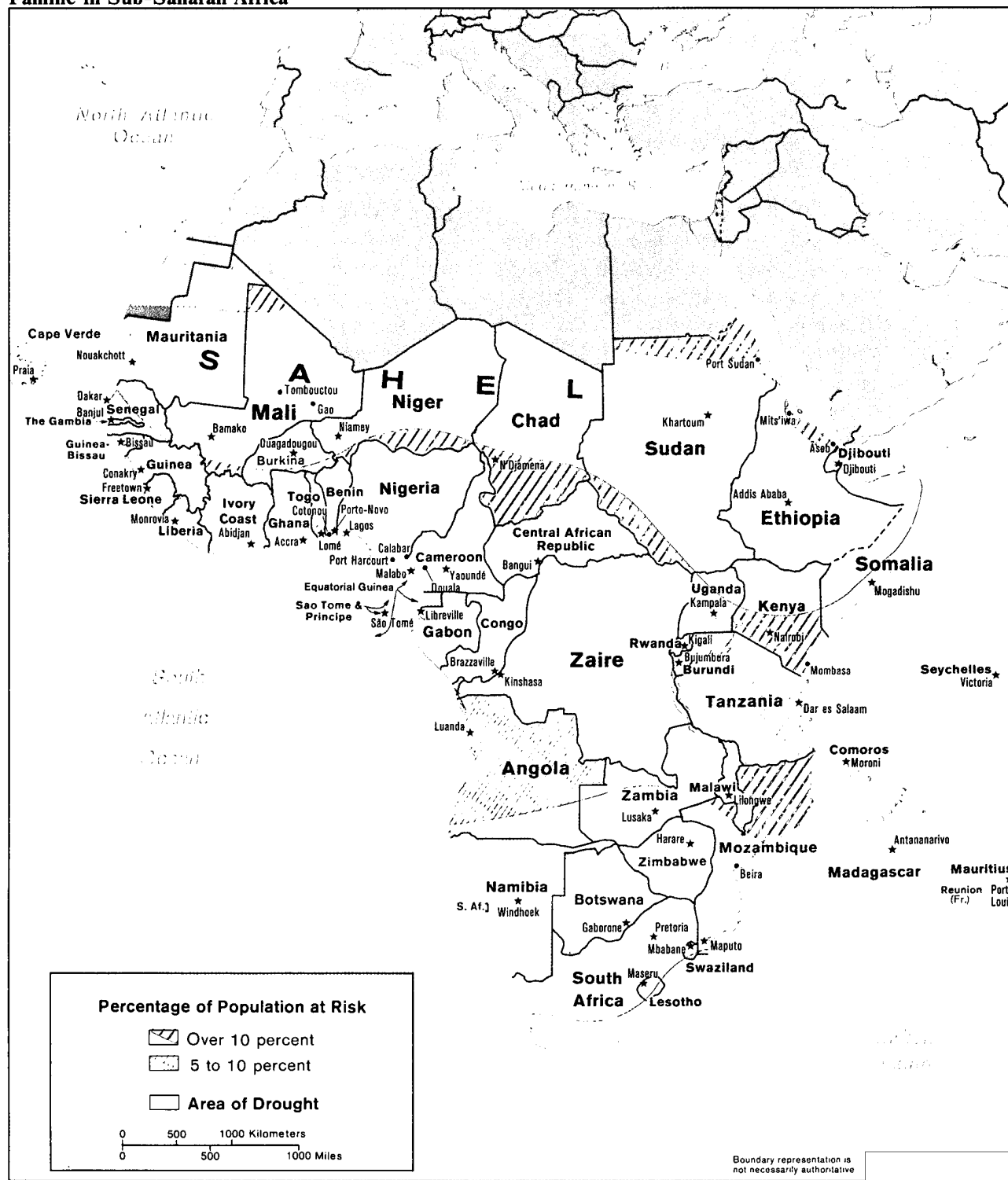
The key to significant improvements in food production is a profound change in indigenous government policies to improve agricultural pricing, eliminate state-controlled marketing boards and collectivized agriculture, and restructure economic priorities in favor of food producers and away from urban populations. There is general agreement among Western donors to encourage and require such structural and policy changes by recipients of food assistance, but we expect improvements to be spotty at best in the next few years. One dilemma for donors is that unconditional famine relief—the most common form of emergency assistance—has the effect of reducing pressure on the recipient governments to make such painful reforms. []

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Figure 1
Famine in Sub-Saharan Africa



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DISCUSSION

Overview of Famine in Africa

1. Food problems in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa have become so severe that at least 14 million people—and possibly as many as 20 million—face permanent disability and even death over the next six to 12 months. Most of those in serious jeopardy are in seven countries: half are in Ethiopia, the rest in Chad, Mali, Niger, Kenya, Sudan, and Mozambique. Substantial numbers of people in 10 other countries, as indicated on the map (figure 1), are also at risk. The number of deaths is likely to peak between February and April next year, as food stocks from October's meager harvest become exhausted. Between 2 million and 5 million metric tons of emergency food aid will be needed through October 1985 if the starving are to be fed at a subsistence level.¹

2. The persistent drought, political turmoil resulting from guerrilla insurgencies, and the displacement of several million people have intensified Africa's famine, but African food problems are chronic. In most Sub-Saharan African countries, ill-conceived government policies have failed to stimulate enough increase in food production to keep up with rapid population growth. As a result, per capita production of food has fallen by 20 percent since the 1960s. At the same time dependence on imported food has increased, foreign exchange earnings—often based on exported agricultural production—have declined. Unable—or unwilling—to purchase food on the international market, African countries have come to rely more and more heavily on international food assistance.

The Donor Community Response

Western Food Assistance

3. Virtually all food aid supplied to Sub-Saharan Africa has been provided by North America, Western

¹ The lower figures cited in this paragraph are projected by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the higher ones by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The inset on the next page discusses the difficulties in estimating those numbers. Figures cited in the annex are for grain shortfalls—which can be satisfied through commercial imports, concessional purchases, and emergency food assistance.

Emergency Western
Food Assistance to
Sub-Saharan Africa ^a

1,000 metric tons of grain

	Delivered in 1983-84	Pledged So Far for 1984-85
Australia	95	15
Canada	151	85
Denmark	57	14
France	83	11
Japan	142	42
Netherlands	98	76
United Kingdom	19	23
United States ^b	505	550
West Germany	80	54
European Community	398	448
Totals	1,628	1,318
Estimated Need 1984-85	2,000-5,000	

^a The data in this table are taken from a UN Food and Agriculture Organization report dated November 1984, so the figures now are approximately two months out of date.

^b The United States also extends over 1.6 million metric tons of grain aid in the form of concessional sales to Sub-Saharan Africa. These sales are not considered emergency food assistance and so are not included in the US total.

Europe, Australia, and Japan.² (See table.) Consequently, these countries can expect increasing requests for food assistance over the next several months. Harvests throughout much of the Sub-Saharan area will be far below normal at least through mid-1985. In many places, farmers have eaten their seed supplies, and crops will not be planted even when the rains return. Thus, the gap between aid that has currently been pledged for the coming year and what will be needed is growing.

4. Less than one-third the amount of grain aid needed for Ethiopia has so far been pledged by donors. That country faces the most severe food emergency

² As discussed in paragraphs 6-8, a small amount of food aid is given to certain Sub-Saharan states by the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; some additional food aid is also provided by Israel to Ethiopia and by South Africa to neighboring states.

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Difficulties in Estimating Numbers of People at Risk and Amount of Emergency Food Aid Needs

Estimates of the number of people at risk of death from starvation and related causes and calculations of the amount of emergency food needed in Sub-Saharan Africa are extremely difficult to do with accuracy:

- *Population figures are notoriously inconsistent and incomplete*, not only because adequate data collection and processing do not exist in many countries, but also because the figures are often deliberately manipulated by local governments for political purposes. Estimates of the Ethiopian population, for example, vary from 32 million (FAO and USDA) to 42.5 million (USAID).
- *Establishing minimal or desirable levels of food intake remains an imprecise science*, although techniques used today yield results that appear more realistic—and substantially lower—than those used in the past. USAID uses 1 pound of grain per day per person to obtain an approximate annual grain requirement on the theory that, in lean times, people tend to cut back their consumption somewhat to compensate for shortages. USDA and the FAO assume slightly more grain is needed on a daily per-person basis.
- *No absolute correlation exists between the cereal/grain gap and emergency need*. Traditionally, emergency food needs are calculated on the difference between estimated cereal requirements and the amounts provided by current production,

commercial imports, stocks in country, and other donor food assistance. This is the method used by the USDA. For several reasons, this tends to *overstate* the emergency food needs, and USAID roughly adjusts its projections for these factors:

- First, the consumption of alternative foods can lessen the impact of cereal/grain shortfalls. Poor harvests in Burundi and Rwanda this year left a 30-percent cereal deficit, but both governments have successfully promoted off-season crop cultivation. Together with the increased consumption of roots and tubers, the calorie void left by the cereal/grain shortfall has largely been filled.
- Second, on-farm food stocks can mitigate the effects of cereal/grain shortfalls. In the Sahel, some farmers traditionally maintain a three- to five-year on-farm food stock as a hedge against erratic climatic conditions, so only a drought lasting several years—as the current one has—places them in serious jeopardy.
- Third, black-market food trade—which is estimated at 30 to 60 percent of legitimate market transactions—further offsets the cereal/grain shortfall.
- Fourth—and this would tend to understate emergency food aid—even if food is available, its cost may be prohibitive for some people.

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anywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in its strife-torn, drought-stricken northern provinces of Welo, Tigray, and Eritrea, and in the southern regions of Harerge and Bale. (See map, figure 2.) Estimates of the number of people threatened with death from starvation and related causes vary from 6 million to 10 million—mostly the young, the infirm, and the elderly. Many of these people now are in or moving toward the cities, towns, feeding stations, and roads of the northern provinces that are under the control of the Mengistu regime. However, substantial numbers of the hungry—perhaps 3-4 million—have remained in insurgent-controlled territory. Emergency food needs over the next year are now conservatively estimated at over 1 million metric tons of grain. Over 90 percent of this grain aid is required in those most affected provinces.

5. The food aid currently reaching Ethiopia is coming through multiple channels, as is typical of African food relief efforts generally. Some of the aid has been channeled through the Government of Ethiopia and its Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). The United States recently reached an agree-

ment with the RRC that will enable the Commission to handle US Government assistance directly for the first time. In addition, large amounts of food relief are being distributed by such international organizations as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the FAO's World Food Program, and private voluntary organizations, including Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children Federation, Lutheran World Federation, Church World Services, and World Vision.

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Soviet Bloc Food Assistance

6. Moscow's response to food problems in Africa has been to insist that they are the result of Western colonial and neocolonial exploitation for which the USSR bears no responsibility. Soviet food and agricultural assistance has been minimal, totaling only about \$45 million between 1972 and 1983.⁹ Most of that aid has gone to present or former clients: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, and Guinea.

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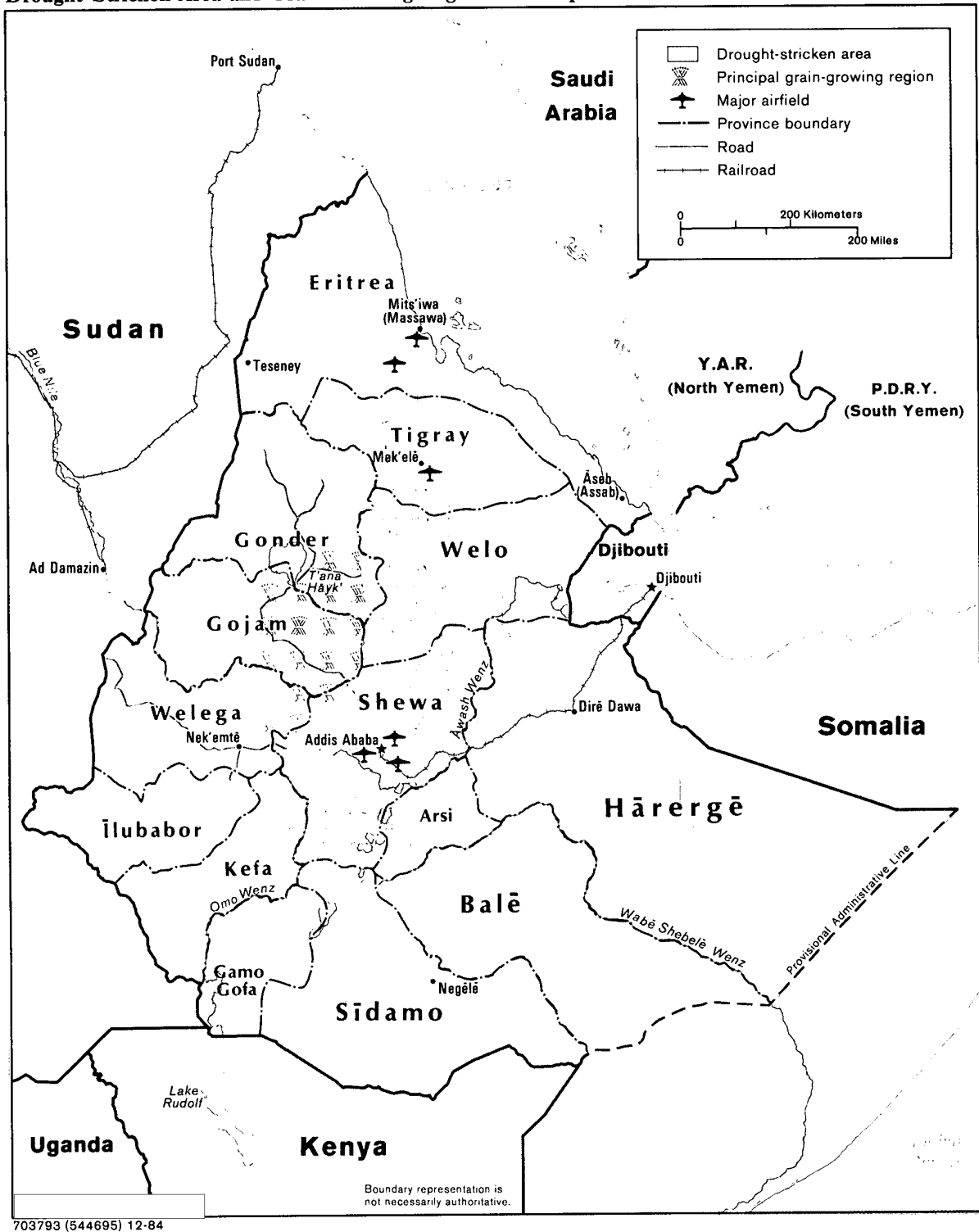
⁹ The Soviet offer of 500 tons of rice to Burkina earlier this year was so meager that President Thomas Sankara refused it as an insult to national honor.

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Figure 2
Drought-Stricken Area and Grain-Growing Region in Ethiopia



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7. The USSR, however, is sensitive to the negative publicity it has received both inside and outside Ethiopia for its limited response to the mounting crisis there. Since the first week of November, Moscow has flown in food and unspecified technical equipment. The actual amount of food pledged—10,000 tons of rice—has not been great and, indeed, just equals the amount given in 1983. The Ethiopian Government has announced its intent to sell the Soviet-supplied rice on the international market. Some or all of the proceeds are likely to be used for the purchase of military equipment. The Soviets have promised to supply 300 trucks, 12 transport aircraft, and 24 helicopters to ease Ethiopia's severe distribution problems; some of these items have been delivered. The transport aircraft have been assigned to the Ethiopian Air Force rather than to a civilian agency, and are being used in the forcible resettlement of northerners to the south. According to Radio Moscow, the USSR will also send 8 tons of medicine, baby food, and other necessities. Meanwhile, other East Bloc countries—East Germany and Bulgaria—have announced plans to provide additional relief aid, including airlift support. []

8. Moscow appears to be driving a relatively hard economic bargain for this assistance, insisting, for example, that Addis Ababa pay for Soviet fuel and personnel expenses incurred as part of the relief operations. The USSR, moreover, has attempted to extract maximum publicity benefits from its minimal relief activity in Ethiopia, undoubtedly hoping to boost its credibility as a reliable supporter of client states and to detract from Western relief efforts. []

Constraints on Delivery of Immediate Relief

Donor Country Constraints

9. Beyond budgetary and logistic constraints, donor countries face numerous problems in providing emergency food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa. For the United States, these include legal prohibitions on the type of food assistance that can be supplied. The Hickenlooper amendment forbids developmental assistance—but permits humanitarian aid—to those countries that have expropriated US property without providing adequate compensation, and the Brooke amendment limits aid to countries that fall more than a year in arrears on payment of interest on US loans. The Mengistu government in Ethiopia continues to drag its feet on compensating US businesses and refuses to comply with the Brooke amendment on grounds of principle, although the amount involved is small (less than \$25 million). The United States, therefore, is

supplying Ethiopia with emergency foodgrain, but not with seeds and fertilizers. Some technological improvements in delivery capability may be permitted. []

10. Donor coordination *within* most famine-affected countries is not a major problem. International organizations and private voluntary organizations have generally proved able in distributing relief supplies once these have arrived in the country. However, coordinating relief efforts *outside* the country is often difficult. Both extremes of congestion and gaps in the arrival of donor food aid have resulted, especially in the landlocked Sahel countries. []

11. This kind of confusion is exacerbated when host governments are either unable or unwilling to help in determining how much food is needed, where it is needed, when it should arrive, and how it will be delivered. In cases where such cooperation from the local government is lacking, the United States has found it more effective to funnel its assistance through international organizations and the private voluntary organizations, whose relationship with the host government is often better than that of the US Government. This has been done quite effectively in Mozambique through the World Food Program and in Angola through the International Committee of the Red Cross. []

Recipient Country Constraints

12. **Logistic Problems.** Logistic problems in distributing emergency food aid abound in the famine-stricken regions, especially in the ground transportation system. Most ports have severely limited discharge and takeout rates. The main Ethiopian port at Aseb (Assab), for example, can discharge about 2,500 metric tons per day—a rate that could be increased immediately if portable vacuators and bagging machines were used to increase the efficiency of offloading ships. Some ports—like that at Mits'iwa (Massawa)—are too shallow to accommodate large grain bulk carriers. []

13. Transporting the unloaded grain inland from the ports depends on the availability of working trucks and the condition of roads⁴ and railroads. Provision of sufficient trucks in good repair and coordination of their arrival at the ports have been recurring problems in Ethiopia, although the number of trucks in the

⁴ When roads are nonexistent or in poor condition and trucks are compelled to move across open country, their maintenance requirements soar. The average useful life of a truck in Somalia, for example, is approximately one year, because of climate and conditions of use. []

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country appears sufficient to meet food aid needs. That country has to rely exclusively on trucking for grain transport because its only operational rail line, from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, is deteriorating, and probably too expensive to expand.⁵ Ethiopia's road system is only marginally better than its railroad. It consists of one narrow, winding road linking the northern highlands to the capital, another from the Red Sea coast down to Addis Ababa, and a few other connecting roads. []

14. Because of their small capacities and high costs, aircraft are practical only in delivering food to isolated areas in emergency circumstances. Most African countries, moreover, have few aircraft that can handle significant amounts of grain and few airfields capable of landing large transport aircraft. Ethiopia has six such airfields in the affected areas—in varying conditions of repair—but only three are located in the northern provinces. Because most large airfields are located in the urban areas, distribution of airlifted grain would still depend on local ground transportation. []

15. Dropping bundles of grain to remote areas from the air is an option, although it is expensive and still constrained by the number and conditions of local airfields. In 1974 the US Air Force used C-130s to deliver food aid to isolated regions in Mali, and chartered commercial aircraft are currently being used in Ethiopia. One C-130 transport can deliver from 10 to 16 metric tons of grain per mission. []

16. *Political and Economic Problems.* The governments of famine-stricken areas are often unable or unwilling to remove logistic delivery obstacles. Inefficiencies in port management are rampant, and overbooking of berths commonly causes ships to stack up offshore. In Ethiopia, authorities were unwilling, until recently, to allocate priority berthing to food relief ships, preferring instead to offload military and development cargo from Eastern Bloc countries. Foreign exchange is still not allocated to purchase replacement parts for nonmilitary trucks. Last February, an FAO survey team estimated that 94 percent of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission trucks were out of service. Mengistu raised the priority of relief efforts after the celebration in September of the 10th anniversary of the revolution, and the greater Ethiopian effort and a donor airlift have increased significantly the rate at which relief supplies can be transshipped at the port of Aseb. []

⁵ Other seriously affected countries, notably Sudan, have better rail systems; the average 15- to 20-car train can deliver roughly 400 metric tons of grain. []

17. The inability of local governments to control portions of their territory held by insurgents and separatist movements further hampers the distribution of emergency food in Ethiopia, Chad, Sudan, Mozambique, and Uganda. The animosity and bitterness that has arisen after years of fighting probably overrides humanitarian appeals in all five countries, but the situation in Ethiopia is especially troublesome. The government's military position has steadily deteriorated over the past two years. Eritrean insurgents have increased the area under their control and put the Ethiopian Army on the defensive. In Tigray Province, insurgents dominate most of the rural area and have expanded their operations into Tigrean-inhabited areas of neighboring Gonder and Welo Provinces, although the regime continues to control the major population centers. (See map, figure 3.) []

18. Road transport throughout these regions is vulnerable to attack. The delivery of supplies frequently is delayed until large armed convoys can be formed, and these operate only during daylight hours. []

Even when convoys do arrive, food distribution generally is limited to government-controlled population centers along the main roads. Addis Ababa has been reluctant to use military transport to provide relief. []

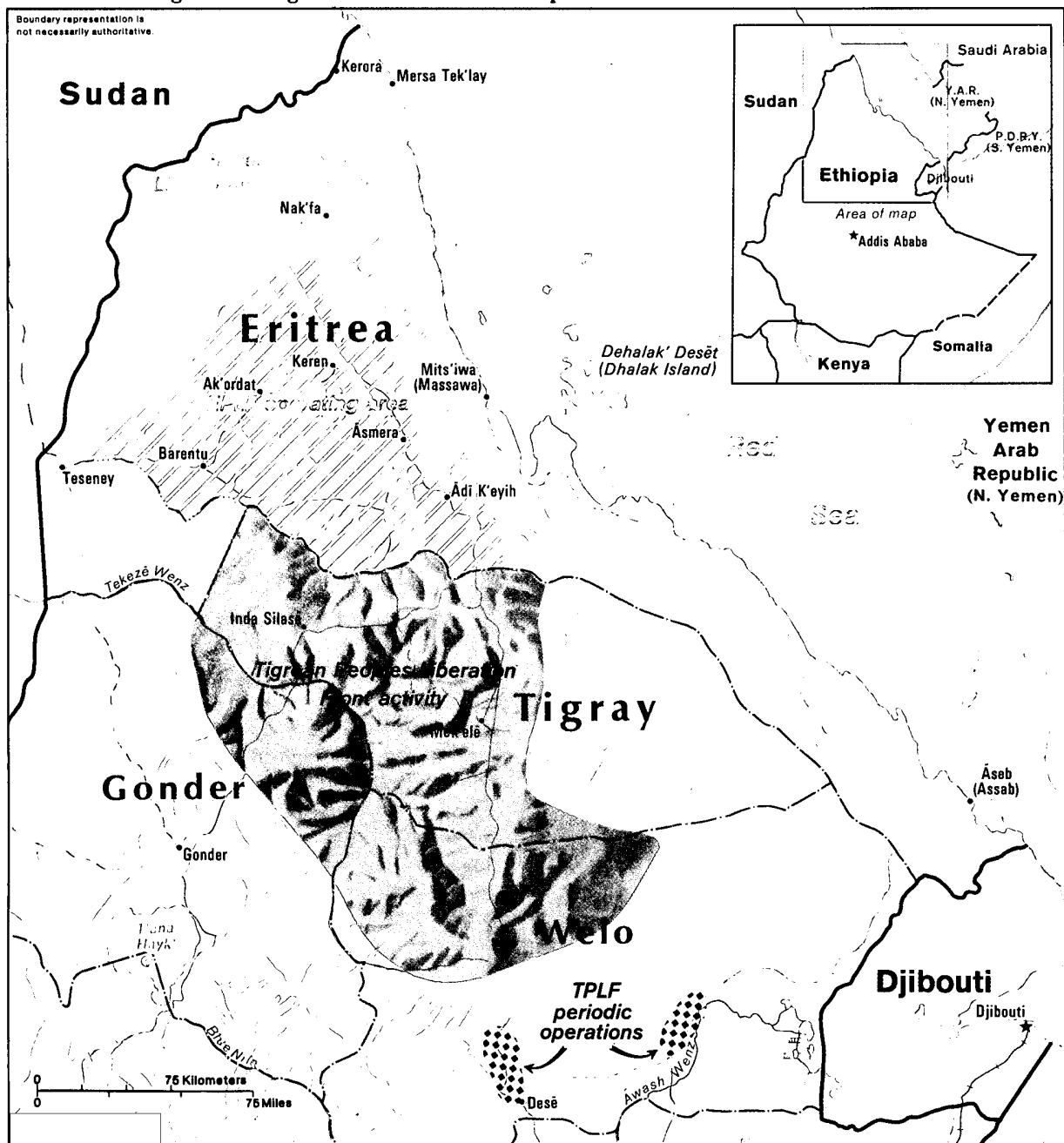
19. Instead, Mengistu has used the famine as a pretext to resurrect and expand a population resettlement plan from the late 1970s aimed at transferring several million people from the north to the more fertile and thinly populated areas of western and southwestern Ethiopia. While the government is touting the program as a means of breaking the cycle of drought and famine in the north, a more probable motivation for the program is Addis Ababa's belief that the shift of peasants from the combat area would cut deeply into the direct support provided the insurgency. The regime also is attempting to use resettlement to further collectivization—a basic aim of its agricultural program—although such schemes are being resisted by peasants in the northern provinces. []

20. The regime is unlikely to make serious concessions to overcome the security problems hampering food delivery. Although in recent government-to-government negotiations Addis Ababa has agreed to allow Western donors to provide food aid to all parts of Ethiopia, the Ethiopians protested to the United States when private donor organizations shipped assistance to insurgent-held territory from Sudan. Mengistu has often accused Khartoum of aiding the rebels. Meanwhile, the government has refused "food truces" []

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Figure 3
Eritrean and Tigrean Insurgencies in Northern Ethiopia



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offered by the rebels, saying that it would not deal with "bandits." Nor has it accepted international mediation of such a truce. We believe the Ethiopian Government would not welcome US or other Western military assistance in distributing food—beyond a token presence. Indeed, Addis Ababa is already uncomfortable with the small British Royal Air Force presence. In addition, attempts by Western states to require publicity of their efforts in Ethiopia will continue to receive a *de minimus* response by the Ethiopian Government so long as donors are unwilling to threaten delays or cutoffs of their assistance. Such Western demands for publicity have been met in Mozambique and other recipient countries. []

21. Mengistu has already taken steps to prevent the famine from undermining his regime. The government has shielded both the military, whose support is essential to the regime's survival, and the urban population from the full effects of the drought. Food for the military probably has come primarily from local sources and not—as the insurgents claim—from diverted relief aid, although some diversion must be expected. The government has used scarce foreign exchange to help cover food requirements in the cities, although some shortages have been reported and rationing has been intensified. Mengistu has also used the military to block the hungry from entering the urban areas and has forcibly transported some of these refugees back into the drought-stricken countryside. []

22. Both geographic constraints and the attitude of the Ethiopian Government make it unlikely that the West would be able to mount substantial relief operations to populations outside the control of the Ethiopian Government. Any overland or air effort from locations controlled by the central government could easily be blocked by the Mengistu regime, and it probably would do so. Primitive or nonexistent roads and the paucity of airfields both in insurgent-controlled areas and in contiguous parts of neighboring Sudan make it unlikely that significant amounts of relief could be moved even under optimum circumstances. []

23. Should the West attempt to increase significantly the small amount of relief supplies moving across the border from Sudan to peoples in insurgent-controlled areas against the will of the Mengistu regime, the Ethiopian Government can be expected to attempt to interdict such efforts—at first, politically and diplomatically but, if necessary, with the use of air and ground forces. Mengistu believes that such assistance could strengthen the regime's enemies and further

weaken the government's position in the north. In addition, he would launch an international propaganda campaign designed to play on the deeply held suspicions of many Africans about Western intentions in Africa. He would probably be quite effective in portraying Western relief efforts as a ruse designed primarily to aid the insurgents and bring down his regime. []

24. The government has publicized the international relief effort, especially from Eastern Bloc countries,⁶ to show it is responding to the crisis. At the same time, [] the Ethiopians have charged that food shortages are not the result of domestic policies but of the inadequate response from donor countries to Addis Ababa's earlier warnings about the seriousness of the drought. Corruption and the siphoning off of relief assistance do not appear to be major problems, although some have probably occurred. Private volunteer organizations and international agencies have closely monitored the situation in Ethiopia and the government has been reasonably forthcoming in providing information on the distribution of famine assistance. []

25. The attitude and policies of the insurgent movements can be expected to compound the problem in Ethiopia, and Western donor planning to cope with these difficulties is still in early stages. The Tigrean insurgents have already destroyed transport vehicles of aid donors suspected of being used for population relocation, which the insurgents oppose. The presence of landmines and the fact that food convoys are escorted by Ethiopian military units increase the risk of hostilities against donor aid vehicles and personnel. There are also indications that the Tigrean insurgents may relocate large population groups—estimated from 100,000 to 250,000—into Sudan, overwhelming Sudanese capabilities to feed and house the half million Ethiopians already there. While donors could, and probably would, respond with increased aid to the Sudanese camps, delays in allocation of resources, shipping, and transport difficulties almost guarantee serious famine and health problems in such camps. On the positive side, the Tigrean insurgents have agreed to food truces—a concept totally opposed by the Mengistu regime. []

Implications for the Soviet Union

26. In our judgment, Moscow is not likely to change its food and agricultural assistance policies in the

⁶ For example, during September's conference of the Organization of African Unity, held in Addis Ababa, all Western aircraft were banned from the capital's airport. Delegates to the conference saw only Soviet and East European aircraft landing and taking off. []

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foreseeable future. Constraints on Soviet food production, shortages of hard currency, and the insistence that African famine is a Western problem make it highly unlikely that Moscow will devote substantial resources to famine relief. If it believes that large-scale starvation poses an immediate threat to the survival of a client regime, the USSR might step up food and transport assistance, as it has in the Ethiopian case. The Soviets would, however, probably provide far more by way of military and security assistance to deal with the immediate challenge to the client leadership.

27. If Western nations were to mount substantial relief operations in Soviet client states, the Soviets would warn the recipient leadership against associating too closely with the West but, following their example in Ethiopia, would probably not press the regime to refuse the aid. They would be more concerned if the West used military aircraft in these efforts—as the British have done in Ethiopia—but, if such operations had the consent of the host government, the Soviets would not apply substantial pressure to the client regime.

28. If the West were to attempt substantial relief operations that had *not* received the consent of the client government—by sending large amounts of food to those in insurgent-controlled parts of Ethiopia—Moscow would probably encourage the regime to take decisive action against this violation of its sovereignty, possibly including the impounding of aircraft and arrest of aircrews. While the Soviets would not be likely to involve their own troops and aircraft, they might step up arms shipments and logistic, technical, and intelligence assistance. In addition, the Soviets would seek to exploit the issue in the United Nations and other international arenas by accusing the West of attempting to overthrow a legitimate Third World government.

29. If, as we believe likely, the USSR continues its famine relief efforts along present minimal lines, regimes aligned with the USSR may look to improve ties to the West in a bid for increased famine and development assistance. If a Soviet ally perceives that its survival is dependent on a massive influx of assistance or substantial economic reform, a move toward the West could result in a significant loss of influence for the USSR, a situation that appears to be playing out in Mozambique. Any such moves, however, will be limited by the extent to which the regime in power believes that continued security ties to the USSR are vital to its own survival.

30. Moscow's tightfisted relief policy may lead to a loss of prestige in the eyes of some African govern-

ments. However, most African leaders—even those of the left—have few illusions about the nature of Soviet policy on the continent. They are likely to assess relations with the USSR on a strictly cost-benefit basis, with little regard for Moscow's image as a patron of Third World causes.

Implications for the United States and the West: Problems and Opportunities

31. The United States and other Western countries face a problem of staggering magnitude and complexity in aiding the famine-stricken regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. The emergency food need is immensely greater than estimated a year ago. Much more aid than currently pledged by Western donors will be required and, in many cases, the coordination among donors in timing food arrivals needs to be improved. The logistics of transporting grain from donors, through the inefficient ports of recipient countries, overland to the hardest hit regions is an enormous task. Moreover, regimes in several countries seriously affected by famine are unwilling to facilitate the movement of relief supplies to needy regions if it is likely to cost them political support in the military and in the urban areas or provide support to their opponents.

32. If it is continued year after year, food assistance will probably slow Africa's progress toward modernizing its agriculture. Experience in the Sahel indicates that food aid can rapidly create dependence in both recipient populations and their governments. The governments have proved especially reluctant to make politically unpopular decisions—such as increasing food prices or cutting back inefficient monopolies staffed with patronage appointees—if food aid is readily available. In the end, only fundamental reforms in African agricultural practices and policies will lessen the region's dependence on food assistance and reduce its vulnerability to periodic drought.

33. The famine has produced greater US-Ethiopian cooperation through the recent inauguration of a government-to-government relief program, but the prospect of that program's leading eventually to a broader relationship seems unlikely at present. Though possessing a strong sense of nationalism, pragmatism, and xenophobia, Mengistu remains a committed Marxist and firm client of Moscow. He and most of the leadership around him are highly suspicious of the motives underlying Western relief in Ethiopia, and will interpret efforts to provide food to insurgent-controlled areas as clear proof of US support for their enemies. His use of the famine to justify a coercive

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resettlement program and his continued advocacy of widespread collectivization of agriculture do not bode well for future US-Ethiopian relations. []

34. Africa's continental food crisis will continue into 1986 and large populations will continue to be at risk even under optimal circumstances, because of declining agricultural production, various constraints on donors and recipients, continuing civil wars, and the lack of meaningful agricultural reform and development. Recurring droughts, floods, and advancing desertification will continue to exacerbate this situation. []

35. While the short-term outlook for African agriculture is bleak, recent improvements in agricultural technology offer hope of increasing African food

productivity in the medium term. A new hybrid sorghum could substantially increase cereal production in large parts of the continent, even in years of low rainfall. New combinations of seeds, fertilizers, livestock, conservation techniques, and cultivation methods have been developed for use on the African highlands. A fully safe vaccine against hoof-and-mouth disease now exists. These improvements can be effective only to the extent that they are understood and implemented by African farmers. This will require national government policies that put a higher priority on farm productivity, including price incentives, agricultural research, storage and marketing infrastructures, and access to improved seeds and chemicals. Without such policy changes, the number of deaths in Africa's next major drought could rise even higher than in this one. []

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ANNEX

Profiles of Selected Countries Facing Acute Food Problems

Although many countries throughout Africa are likely to appeal to the United States for help to relieve localized or short-term food shortages during 1985, we believe that, in addition to Ethiopia, the countries described below face particularly acute problems. []

Mali

The failure of rains in important production zones in 1984 and persistent drought conditions in the Tombouctou/Gao area will produce a serious food deficit in Mali during the coming year. Most estimates suggest that upwards of one-quarter of Mali's 7.7 million people will face famine. The net cereal deficit during the crop year that began this fall is likely to be in the range of 450,000 to 480,000 metric tons—some 150,000 tons greater than last year. Thus far the United States has pledged over 23,000 tons while other donors have committed approximately 50,000. In Mali, as in other landlocked African countries, logistic difficulties of moving assistance from ports inland to the needy will be the major obstacle to providing effective relief. []

Although the Traore government openly admits the severity of the food crisis and is cooperating with Western donor efforts, administrative and infrastructure difficulties will hamper the distribution of emergency food. Mali's national relief agency reportedly is a one-man operation. A donor consensus on how best to respond to Mali's emergency needs has not yet been formed although a multidonor agency that provides information on donor inputs does exist. []

Ivory Coast's port at Abidjan—now discharging about 6,000 metric tons of grain per week for Mali—can handle Mali's needs. The problems lie in getting food from port to needed areas. Discharge is slowed somewhat during the rainy season, and last year there were forwarding problems because food shipments were clustered and low transport rates failed to attract non-Malian truckers. In addition, Mali's internal transportation network is primitive, especially in the hard-hit northern and eastern regions. The existing rail line between the port of Dakar in Senegal and Mali's capital, Bamako, could provide limited additional food transport. []

President Traore—in power since 1968—appears to be fully in control for now and faces little organized, civilian opposition. The military remains the most serious potential threat, but any disgruntled officers will find it difficult to use the drought as a pretext for a coup as long as the regime appears committed to combating the drought and overcoming distribution problems. []

In recent years, President Traore has attempted to balance continuing military ties to Moscow by introducing economic reforms in an effort to gain increased Western economic assistance. The impact of continued compliance with the IMF program and Traore's economic reorientation efforts, however, will be a long time coming. In the meantime, Traore—or any successor—must wrestle with the political and social fallout from prolonged and persistent drought conditions. The limited resources of Bamako and other southern cities are severely strained by the continuing influx of refugees from drought-stricken areas. []

Chad

An estimated 1.5 million of Chad's 5.1 million people are at risk of starvation and the other endemic effects of prolonged hunger over the next six months. Food shortages already have resulted in several thousand deaths and caused widespread displacement of Chadians, both within Chad and to neighboring Sudan and Nigeria. Cereal production is only about 75 percent of the level of 1983, a year of widespread food shortages. Although food aid commitments total 113,000 metric tons, Chad still faces a net cereal deficit of between 160,000 and 325,000 tons through 1985. World Food Program officials agree with this shortfall estimate and note that 25,000 tons is needed to meet immediate needs. USAID notes that the current food pipeline must be kept loaded and shipping well coordinated if an even greater disaster is to be avoided. Given the magnitude of the logistic problems, continuing border difficulties, and constant political turmoil, meeting immediate emergency needs will be difficult. []

Food aid destined for landlocked Chad normally arrives at the ports of Douala, in Cameroon, and

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Lagos, in Nigeria. The approximate transit time from Lagos should be six days, but shipments of food and fuel have consistently been held up because of Nigeria's strict border controls to combat black-marketeering and a continuing dispute with N'Djamena over the sovereignty of islands in Lake Chad. Recently the shaky Buhari government has indicated it prefers that Chadian food aid not go through Nigeria. Transit time from Douala is approximately 25 days, but the forwarding capacity from Douala averages only 5,000 metric tons per month, far below what is needed to meet Chad's needs. []

All food aid must enter N'Djamena via the Chari River by ferry, which is unable to operate when water levels are low. A semipermanent bridge is under consideration but could not be in place before August 1985. Virtually all roads from N'Djamena are in serious disrepair, with many in the south and east subject to rebel disruption. []

The one bright spot is the coordination between donors and the Chadian Government in planning and implementing emergency programs. It is viewed as a model for other drought-stricken countries. A joint government-donor committee meets weekly to coordinate and establish distribution plans. []

Despite genuine concern about the food plight of Chad's civilian population, President Habre will always give first priority to the military threat posed by Libyan-backed insurgents. In the past, Habre has sometimes diverted donor food to his troops, and the appropriation and sale of donor food by corrupt local officials is a continuing problem. []

The food situation will make the Habre government even more politically vulnerable, and the continued instability will further aggravate the food situation and hamper relief efforts. The central government lacks effective control over large portions of Chad, and the population remains reluctant to rely on promises from any national leader to ensure adequate food assistance. Chronic factional violence has discouraged peasant farmers from planting, while insurgent groups frequently pillage food stocks. A Libyan-backed insurgency has become increasingly effective in disrupting the economy of the south—the country's major food-producing region []

Niger

Nearly half of Niger's 6.3 million people have been affected by severe drought, and over 1.5 million lives are estimated to be at risk this year. Rainfall this year is only about half of the 30-year average, cereal

production is less than 50 percent of last year's harvest, total agricultural production could dip below levels recorded during the early 1970s drought, and cattle losses in the northern livestock zone are reportedly in the 60- to 65-percent range. []

[] estimates that Niger must have at least 350,000 metric tons of emergency food by the end of this year, when the Nigerien Government reports its food stock will be depleted. The United States and other donors plan to send some 10,000 tons of emergency food supplies to Niger in the next few months to meet immediate needs. Maximum cooperation can be expected from the Kountche government, but logistic difficulties—particularly with transporting supplies from port to Niger through Nigeria—will prove difficult to overcome and will impede any relief efforts. []

The quantity of donor emergency food already exceeds the capacity of port facilities—Calabar in Nigeria, Lome in Togo, and Cotonou in Benin—now available to receive shipments for Niger. These three ports have offloaded 30,000 metric tons of grain per month for Niger. The Nigerian Government is resisting increasing Western diplomatic pressures to use the larger Lagos and Port Harcourt ports in favor of Calabar in an effort to revitalize the Calabar area's depressed economy. []

Despite its promises to permit shipment of aid to Niger, Nigeria is likely to remain a serious bottleneck. Within Niger itself, delivery depends on trucking capacity, which is constrained by poor maintenance and lack of spare parts. []

The Government of Niger has established an inter-ministerial committee to coordinate relief efforts, and has mounted a campaign to publicize its actions. Thus far, however, these moves have not lived up to popular expectations or those of foreign donors. USAID in Niamey is trying to persuade donors to adopt a common strategy for implementing the major relief effort now getting under way. []

President Seyni Kountche himself came to power partly because of food shortages and government mismanagement of relief during the drought of the early 1970s. Before this year's drought, Kountche's military government had made genuine progress toward food self-sufficiency, partly by raising cereal prices for producers, concentrating investment on food rather than cash crops, and improving storage and distribution facilities. []

Despite Kountche's efforts, the potential for urban unrest remains, as increasing numbers of rural peasants flock to Niamey and other southern cities in

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search of food and shelter. Kountche faces a difficult task in making sure immediate food needs are met with a minimum of delay, corruption, and inefficiency, and in persuading fellow Nigeriens to accept a prolonged period of economic austerity. []

Sudan

Sudan is among the continent's most seriously famine-affected countries, and estimates put the number at risk at more than 4 million. In addition, Sudan may have to contend with an estimated 100,000 Chadians and 100,000 to 250,000 Ethiopians who are likely to enter Sudan during the next six months, on top of the 700,000 refugees already there. USAID estimates that the net grain deficit through October 1985 now stands at between 800,000 and 1.6 million metric tons. The United States has pledged close to 400,000 tons while other donors have committed almost as much. Given Sudan's deteriorating foreign exchange position, commercial imports are unlikely. []

Sudan's only links to the outside world are Port Sudan and the airport at Khartoum. Port Sudan has relatively good offloading and grain storage capacity, which could be expanded. Potential bottlenecks in distributing aid include ground transport, which is plagued by constant fuel shortages, and internal gravel-surfaced runways that limit the type and number of aircraft that can land. Rail facilities also are inadequate and suffer from a shortage of both locomotives and storage cars. An insurgency in southern Sudan limits the government's ability to deal with any problems, food or otherwise, in that area. []

The government has so far cooperated fully with the multinational food relief effort in Sudan, but President Nimeiri recently has voiced concern that Sudan is developing a bad image internationally from publicity about the drought and the emergency relief program. In addition he warned that refugees constitute an excessive burden on his government, and he called for international efforts to focus on stemming the flow of refugees from Ethiopia and Chad. []

The inability to provide adequate food, fuel, and commodities during the next year could seriously threaten the Nimeiri regime. Food riots already have taken place in several Sudanese cities this fall and large numbers of drought-stricken migrants have descended on Khartoum. The loyalty of security forces will be stretched if economic grievances stimulate civil unrest in the capital. []

Kenya

For 20 years, Kenya has successfully stimulated agricultural production with research, extension services, and price incentives for farmers. Consequently, Kenya's current food problems—while serious—are less desperate than those of other afflicted countries. []

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The lack of rainfall from March to June 1984, however, has led to the worst drought in this century for most of Kenya. USAID estimates that over 1.6 million Kenyans—5 percent of the population—will be unable to provide or buy their own food. Official estimates indicate Kenya will have to import about 1 million metric tons of corn and some 300,000 tons of wheat in the year ending 30 June 1985. More than 200,000 metric tons will have been purchased by the Kenyan Government. Arranged commercial and donor shipments, already partially delivered, will cover over half of the corn and almost all the wheat requirements. Preoccupation with the situation in other countries could slow the pace of donor commitments during coming months, however, and force the government to step up commercial imports. []

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The government generally has been willing to work with donors, and there appear to be no major problems with regard to donor cooperation. Mombasa, Kenya's principal port, handles not only Kenya's imports and exports but also transit traffic for Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of eastern Zaire. Currently, about 3 million metric tons of grain are being offloaded per year and, barring logjams, that should be adequate to handle food arrivals. Internal distribution efforts appear to be going well, but logistic difficulties probably have kept the government from reaching some stricken areas. The transport of food from government warehouses to district-level food distribution points has been hampered by a shortage of private trucks. The moderate, pro-Western Moi government is unlikely to set up deliberate obstacles to donor efforts, but a massive inflow of assistance would tax the country's road and rail infrastructure. []

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The government's performance to date makes it unlikely, but not impossible, that its relief effort will collapse or produce political instability. Moi faces a number of challenges—particularly from its Kikuyus, embittered by the lessening of their political and economic influence. These pressures could be exacerbated if the government fails to respond adequately to a food crisis. In addition, the military, organized labor, students, the press, or the parliament could attempt to capitalize on the regime's failure to meet the needs of its people, although these groups have been quiet or

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muzzled recently. Such a situation would not occur overnight, however, and close monitoring of government aid distribution efforts should provide warning of an emerging crisis. []

Mozambique

At least 100,000 people of Mozambique died in the 1983 famine, and at least 2.4 million have been affected by food shortages this year. []

[] Mozambique has sufficient food supplies to last until the May 1985 harvest. UN officials fear a potential famine should the harvest fail. The Soviet Union has supplied large amounts of military assistance to the Machel government over the past decade, but has provided little food aid. []

Mozambique faces few logistic problems at Beira and Maputo—the principal ports—or in warehouses

throughout the country. Distribution, however, is seriously hampered by the continuing insurgency throughout most of the country, inadequate transportation, and severe fuel shortages. In-country transportation recently has been helped by the delivery of trucks from Sweden and the Netherlands and by rehabilitation of trucks already in Mozambique. The Machel government cooperates with relief efforts, and there do not appear to be serious donor coordination problems. []

The Machel government continues to face a serious threat from the National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) insurgency, and a worsening famine could aggravate discontent and provide some recruits for the guerrillas. To help preclude urban unrest, his regime needs to ensure adequate food supplies to the few major cities. []

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